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ABSTRACT

As part of the Project on Expanding Regional Cooperation in Graduate and Professional Education, broad changes are reported in graduate enrollment over the past six years in the 13 western states that comprise the compact of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming). Tables show that graduate enrollment peaked in the academic year 1975-1976: that enrollment in the graduate school of the member states has varied greatly from year to year; and that contrary to expectations, the recent declines in graduates have resulted from a decrease in part-time student enrollment rather than full-time enrollment declines. Other findings demonstrate that California enrollment dominates the figures (with almost 60 percent of the total): that 59 percent of those enrolled in graduate study were men; and that the proportion of women enrolled in graduate school is rising slowly (less than one percent in the west and less than two percent nationally). (PHR)

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Project on Expanding Regional Cooperation in Graduate and Professional Education

GRADUATE ENROLLMENT IN THE WEST 1973-74 TO 1978-79

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Improving Education in The West

GRADUATE ENROLLMENT IN THE WEST 1973-74 TO 1978-79

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December 1979

Report 79-4

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education
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INTRODUCTION

This report examines broad changes in graduate enrollment over the past six years in the thirteen western states which comprise the Compact of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education. It is intended to provide educators and policy makers with an historical perspective on graduate education in the West.

The source of the data in this report is the Higher Education General Information Survey on Opening Fall Enrollment. These enrollment figures may vary from those collected by state agencies because of variations in reporting definitions, differences in reporting dates, and even institutional misunderstandings of the data to be reported. In the aggregate, these errors tend to counterbalance each other, resulting in statistics which are reliable indicators of trends.

This report was prepared by Dennis W. Viehland, Research Assistant with the Graduate Education Project of WICHE. Support for the project comes from a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York and from WICHE state dues.

WESTERN GRADUATE ENROLLMENT

HIGHLIGHTS

Available data indicate that western graduate headcount[1] enrollment peaked in the academic year 1975-76.

- In the fall of 1978, enrollment stood at 191,340, down 2.5 percent from the fall 1977 figure of 196,148. The 1978-79 enrollment in the West accounted for 17.6 percent of graduate enrollment nationally (table 1).

Enrollment in the graduate schools of the thirteen western states has varied greatly from year to year.

- Four states (Colorado, Hawaii, New Mexico and Washington) have experienced fairly stable full-time equivalent (FTE)[2] enrollment, although only two of those states (Hawaii and New Mexico) have had stable headcount enrollment in the years 1973-74 to 1978-79 (tables 2 and 4).

Contrary to expectations, the recent declines in graduate headcount enrollment have resulted from a decrease in part-time student enrollment.

- This phenomenon differs from the well-publicized undergraduate enrollment patterns in which enrollment changes are attributable to declines in full-time participation and increases in part-time student attendance.

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[1] Headcount: The number of full-time and part-time students enrolled.

[2] Full-Time Equivalent (FTE): The number of full-time students enrolled plus the sum of credit hours of all part-time students divided by the normal full-time credit-hour load. For example, two students, each enrolled for half-time credit loads, would represent one FTE enrollment.

California graduate enrollment dominates the figures for the West as a whole.

- In 1978-79, for example, California enrollment comprised 59.8 percent of western headcount enrollment and, in fact, comprised 10.5 percent of graduate enrollment nationally (table 1).

The proportion of full-time[3] graduate enrollment in the West and nation has increased.

- Forty-two percent of the western graduate enrollment in 1974-75 consisted of full-time students; by 1978-79 that percentage had increased to 49 percent (table 6).

- The ratio of FTE to headcount enrollment has increased in the West as a whole and in the nation. When California is excluded from this computation, however, the ratio has declined (table 5).

- The proportion of students enrolled on a full-time basis has increased steadily since 1974-75 (table 8).

Surprisingly, trends for headcount and FTE enrollment run counter to one another in some years.

- Specifically, in the years 1973-74 to 1975-76, western graduate headcount enrollment decreased while FTE enrollment increased, and vice versa (tables 2 and 4, figure 1).

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[3] Full-Time Student: Students with academic course work which is at least 75 percent of the normal full-time load. Part-Time Student: Students with academic coursework which is less than 75 percent of the normal full-time load.

In the years examined, the majority of graduate students, regionally and nationally, were men.

- In 1978-79 men accounted for 59 percent of western graduate enrollment and 54 percent of national graduate enrollment (table 7).

The proportion of women enrolled in graduate school has risen, but the increase has been very gradual.

- The increase from 1974-75 to 1978-79 was less than 1 percent in the West and less than 2 percent nationally (table 7).

In 1978-79 the majority of men attending graduate school in the West were enrolled on a full-time basis, while women graduate students were largely part-time enrollees. However, women in the West were more likely to be enrolled as full-time students than were their national counterparts.

- In 1978-79 51.2 percent of the men attending western graduate schools were enrolled as full-time students. In the same year 45.2 percent of the women attending graduate school in the West were enrolled full-time (table 8).

- While the percentage of women enrolled as full-time graduate students in the West stood at 45.2, the comparable figure nationally was lower, 34.4 percent (table 8).

Table 1

Western Graduate Headcount Enrollment
1973-74 to 1978-79

	1973-74	1974-75	1975-76	1976-77	1977-78	1978-79	1978-79 Western State Distribution
Alaska	1725	1286	1195	767	1066	1146	0.6%
Arizona	15953	17620	18876	13697	13871	14055	7.3%
California	149875*	152980*	174456*	117963	118580	114324	59.8%
Colorado	15909	15624	13002	13403	13448	13365	7.0%
Hawaii	4066	3639	3622	3679	3728	3816	2.0%
Idaho	3058	3032	3412	4960	4358	3117	1.6%
Montana	1898	2332	2698	1964	2131	2101	1.1%
Nevada	1696	1835	1988	1505	1613	1554	0.8%
New Mexico	5583	5606	6041	6069	6155	6134	3.2%
Oregon	12514	11555	12533	9673	9650	9258	4.8%
Utah	7179	7210	7558	6028	7456	7747	4.1%
Washington	16234	12591	13011	13029	12978	13674	7.1%
Wyoming	1461	1423	1015	1221	1114	1049	0.6%
West	237151*	236733*	259407*	193958	196148	191340	100.0%
U.S.	1127950	1194097	1267537	1089290	1090463	1085378	
West without California	87276	83753	84951	75995	77568	77016	
% Change	4.5%	-4.0%	1.4%	-10.5%	2.1%	-0.7%	

*Figures for California in 1973-74, 1974-75, and 1975-76 are not comparable to other states because of inclusion of extension students in those years.

Table 2

Western Graduate Headcount Enrollment
1973-74 to 1978-79
(Index Numbers: 1973-74 = 100)

	1973-74	1974-75	1975-76	1976-77	1977-78	1978-79
Alaska	100	75	69	44	62	66
Arizona	100	110	118	86	87	88
California*				100	101	97
Colorado	100	98	82	84	85	84
Hawaii	100	89	89	90	92	94
Idaho	100	99	112	162	143	102
Montana	100	123	142	103	112	111
Nevada	100	108	117	89	95	92
New Mexico	100	100	108	109	110	110
Oregon	100	92	100	77	77	74
Utah	100	79	82	66	81	84
Washington	100	78	80	80	80	84
Wyoming	100	97	69	84	76	72
West*				100	101	99
U.S.	100	106	112	97	97	96
West without California	100	96	97	87	89	88

*Base year of 1976-77 used because of a change in counting procedures in California.

Table 3

Western Graduate FTE Enrollment
1973-74 to 1978-79

	1973-74	1974-75	1975-76	1976-77	1977-78	1978-79	1978-79 Western State Distribution
Alaska	712	494	496	378	294	338	0.3%
Arizona	8751	14143	11155	8483	9314	7870	6.4%
California	85414*	86096*	101755*	74425	74275	73487	59.5%
Colorado	10292	9181	9878	10190	10474	9348	7.6%
Hawaii	2944	2554	2466	2575	2560	2567	2.1%
Idaho	1524	1607	1864	2439	1943	1638	1.3%
Montana	1132	1720	1901	1155	1367	918	0.7%
Nevada	987	922	1150	800	1048	705	0.6%
New Mexico	3557	3435	3684	3703	3529	3492	2.8%
Oregon	6709	7631	8170	6537	6564	6743	5.4%
Utah	4786	4937	4977	4173	5688	5601	4.5%
Washington	9728	9477	9811	9665	9944	10124	8.2%
Wyoming	945	1100	850	907	851	744	0.6%
West	137481*	143297*	158157*	125430	127851	123575	100.0%
U.S.	613914	642911	725574	649550	658738	635323	
West without California	52067	57201	56402	51005	53576	50088	
% Change	-2.9%	9.9%	-1.4%	-9.6%	5.0%	-6.5%	

*Figures for California in 1973-74, 1974-75, and 1975-76 are not comparable to other states because of inclusion of extension students in those years.

Table 4

Western Graduate FTE Enrollment
1973-74 to 1978-79
(Index Numbers: 1973-74 = 100)

	1973-74	1974-75	1975-76	1976-77	1977-78	1978-79
Alaska	100	69	70	53	41	47
Arizona	100	162	127	97	106	90
California*				100	100	99
Colorado	100	89	96	99	102	91
Hawaii	100	87	84	87	87	87
Idaho	100	105	122	160	127	107
Montana	100	152	168	102	121	81
Nevada	100	93	117	81	106	71
New Mexico	100	97	104	104	99	98
Oregon	100	114	122	97	98	101
Utah	100	103	104	87	119	117
Washington	100	97	101	99	102	104
Wyoming	100	116	90	96	90	79
West*				100	102	99
U.S.	100	105	118	106	107	103
West without California	100	110	108	98	103	96

*Base year of 1976-77 used because of a change in counting procedures in California.

Figure 1

Changes in Western Graduate Enrollment

1973-74 (Base Year) to 1978-79

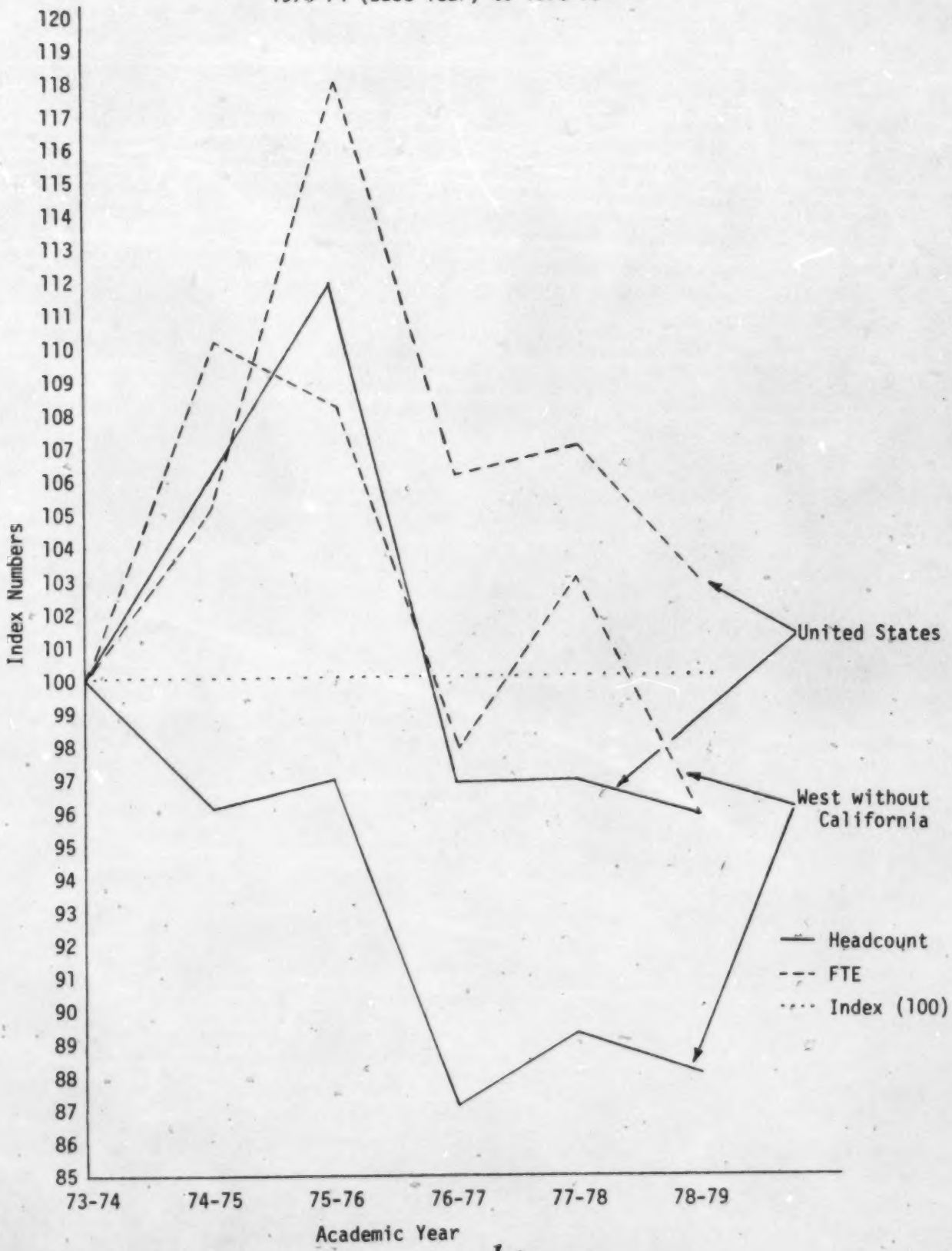


Table 5

Western Graduate Enrollment: Ratio of FTE to Headcount
Selected Years

	1974-75	1976-77	1978-79
Alaska	.38	.49	.29
Arizona	.80	.62	.56
California	.56	.63	.64
Colorado	.59	.76	.70
Hawaii	.70	.70	.67
Idaho	.53	.49	.53
Montana	.74	.59	.44
Nevada	.50	.53	.45
New Mexico	.61	.61	.57
Oregon	.66	.68	.73
Utah	.68	.69	.72
Washington	.75	.74	.74
Wyoming	.77	.74	.71
West	.61	.65	.65
U.S.	.54	.80	.59
West without California	.68	.67	.65

Table 6

Western Graduate Headcount Enrollment by Full- and Part-time Enrollment
Selected Years

	1974-75		1976-77		1978-79	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
Alaska	196 (15.2%)	1090 (84.8%)	186 (24.3%)	581 (75.7%)	249 (21.7%)	897 (78.3%)
Arizona	12405 (70.4%)	5215 (29.6%)	5916 (43.2%)	7781 (56.8%)	6046 (43.0%)	8009 (57.0%)
California	53500 (35.0%)	99480 (65.0%)	52978 (44.9%)	64985 (55.1%)	53402 (46.7%)	60922 (53.3%)
Colorado	8047 (51.5%)	7577 (48.5%)	8606 (64.2%)	4797 (35.8%)	8037 (60.1%)	5328 (39.9%)
Hawaii	2011 (55.3%)	1628 (44.7%)	2031 (55.2%)	1648 (44.8%)	2011 (52.7%)	1805 (47.3%)
Idaho	1006 (33.2%)	2026 (66.8%)	1198 (24.2%)	3762 (75.8%)	965 (31.0%)	2152 (69.0%)
Montana	1484 (63.6%)	848 (36.4%)	755 (38.4%)	1209 (61.6%)	793 (37.7%)	1308 (62.3%)
Nevada	661 (36.0%)	1174 (64.0%)	452 (30.0%)	1053 (70.0%)	425 (27.3%)	1129 (72.7%)
New Mexico	2407 (42.9%)	3199 (57.1%)	2537 (41.8%)	3532 (58.2%)	2516 (41.0%)	3618 (59.0%)
Oregon	5698 (49.3%)	5857 (50.7%)	4994 (51.6%)	4679 (48.4%)	5736 (62.0%)	3522 (38.0%)
Utah	3801 (52.7%)	3409 (47.3%)	3258 (54.0%)	2770 (46.0%)	4087 (52.8%)	3660 (47.2%)
Washington	7950 (63.1%)	4641 (36.9%)	8007 (61.5%)	5022 (38.5%)	8303 (60.7%)	5371 (39.3%)
Wyoming	939 (66.0%)	484 (34.0%)	752 (61.6%)	469 (38.4%)	633 (60.3%)	416 (39.7%)
West	100105 (42.3%)	136628 (57.7%)	91670 (47.3%)	102288 (52.7%)	93203 (48.7%)	98137 (51.3%)
U.S.	428989 (35.9%)	765108 (64.1%)	432960 (39.7%)	656330 (60.3%)	433083 (39.9%)	652295 (60.1%)

Table 7

Western Graduate Headcount Enrollment by Sex of Student
Selected Years

	1974-75		1976-77		1978-79	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Alaska	664 (51.6%)	622 (48.4%)	436 (56.8%)	331 (43.2%)	574 (50.1%)	572 (49.9%)
Arizona	10200 (57.9%)	7420 (42.1%)	7942 (58.0%)	5755 (42.0%)	8074 (57.4%)	5981 (42.6%)
California	90397 (59.1%)	62583 (40.9%)	71182 (60.3%)	46781 (39.7%)	67811 (59.3%)	46513 (40.7%)
Colorado	8604 (55.1%)	7020 (44.9%)	8035 (59.9%)	5368 (40.1%)	7650 (57.2%)	5715 (42.8%)
Hawaii	2094 (57.5%)	1545 (42.5%)	2080 (56.5%)	1599 (43.5%)	2108 (55.2%)	1708 (44.8%)
Idaho	1989 (65.6%)	1043 (34.4%)	2875 (58.0%)	2085 (42.0%)	1729 (55.5%)	1388 (44.5%)
Montana	1618 (69.4%)	714 (30.6%)	1254 (63.8%)	710 (36.2%)	1172 (55.8%)	929 (44.2%)
Nevada	1002 (54.6%)	833 (45.4%)	800 (53.2%)	705 (46.8%)	766 (49.3%)	788 (50.7%)
New Mexico	3459 (61.7%)	2147 (38.3%)	3462 (57.0%)	2607 (43.0%)	3392 (55.3%)	2742 (44.7%)
Oregon	6794 (58.8%)	4761 (41.2%)	5593 (57.8%)	4080 (42.2%)	5293 (57.2%)	3965 (42.8%)
Utah	5221 (72.4%)	1989 (27.6%)	4129 (68.5%)	1899 (31.5%)	5144 (66.4%)	2603 (33.6%)
Washington	8105 (64.4%)	4486 (35.6%)	7913 (60.7%)	5116 (39.3%)	8190 (59.9%)	5484 (40.1%)
Wyoming	906 (63.7%)	517 (36.3%)	905 (74.1%)	316 (25.9%)	615 (58.6%)	434 (41.4%)
West	141053 (59.6%)	95680 (40.4%)	116606 (60.1%)	77352 (39.9%)	112518 (58.8%)	78822 (41.2%)
U.S.	664624 (55.7%)	529473 (44.3%)	604028 (55.5%)	485262 (44.5%)	585493 (53.9%)	499885 (46.1%)

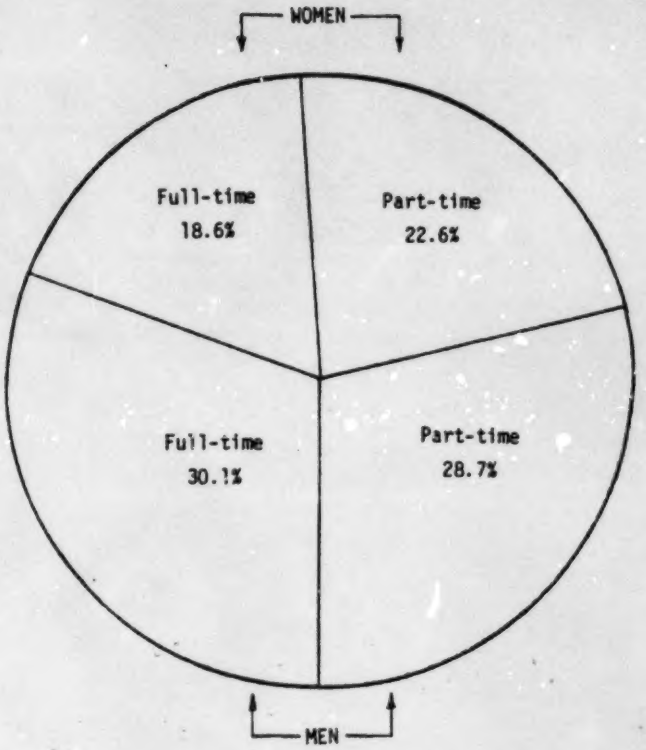
Table 8

Western Graduate Headcount Enrollment
Percent of Men and Women Enrolled Full-time
Selected Years

	1974-75		1976-77		1978-79	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Alaska	18.2%	12.1%	26.4%	21.5%	24.9%	18.5%
Arizona	74.0%	65.4%	48.1%	36.5%	48.2%	36.1%
California	38.5%	29.8%	46.5%	42.5%	48.3%	44.5%
Colorado	61.6%	39.2%	67.2%	59.8%	63.5%	55.7%
Hawaii	51.5%	60.4%	52.6%	58.7%	50.6%	55.3%
Idaho	39.0%	22.1%	29.2%	17.2%	39.4%	20.5%
Montana	67.1%	55.9%	38.3%	38.7%	39.3%	35.8%
Nevada	43.6%	26.9%	36.0%	23.3%	31.7%	23.1%
New Mexico	47.1%	36.2%	47.3%	34.4%	45.6%	35.4%
Oregon	56.5%	39.1%	54.8%	47.2%	66.8%	55.4%
Utah	54.6%	47.7%	57.1%	47.4%	55.5%	47.3%
Washington	65.8%	58.3%	63.0%	59.1%	62.4%	58.3%
Wyoming	73.8%	52.2%	60.7%	64.2%	71.9%	44.0%
West	46.4%	36.2%	49.5%	43.9%	51.2%	45.2%
U.S.	41.6%	28.8%	44.7%	33.6%	44.6%	34.4%

Figure 2

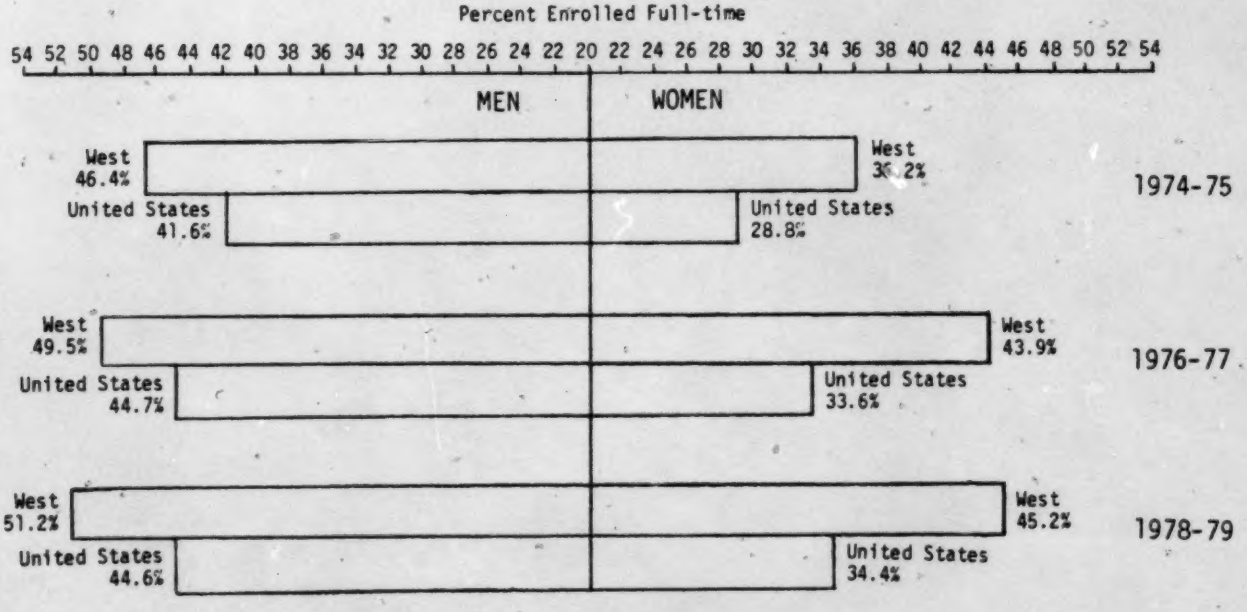
1978-79 Western Graduate Enrollment



1978-79 Western Graduate Enrollment		
MEN		
Full-time	57,551	(30.1%)
Part-time	54,967	(28.7%)
WOMEN		
Full-time	35,652	(18.6%)
Part-time	43,170	(22.6%)
	191,340	

Figure 3

Western Graduate Headcount Enrollment, Proportion of Men and Women Enrolled Full-Time for Selected Years



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